



Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Population: 4.8 million people

Human Development Index ranking: 187 of 188 countries (UNDP)

Number of internally displaced (UNHCR): over 384 000, including over 49 000 in the capital Bangui

Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR): 473 400 in neighbouring countries

2.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance

Around **2.5 million** people are food insecure

2.4 million children are affected by the crisis (UNICEF)

European Commission humanitarian aid in 2016: €24 million, benefiting 523 000 people

European Commission humanitarian aid since December 2013: **€107.5 million**

EU humanitarian assistance (European Commission and EU Member States) since **2014: over €259 million**

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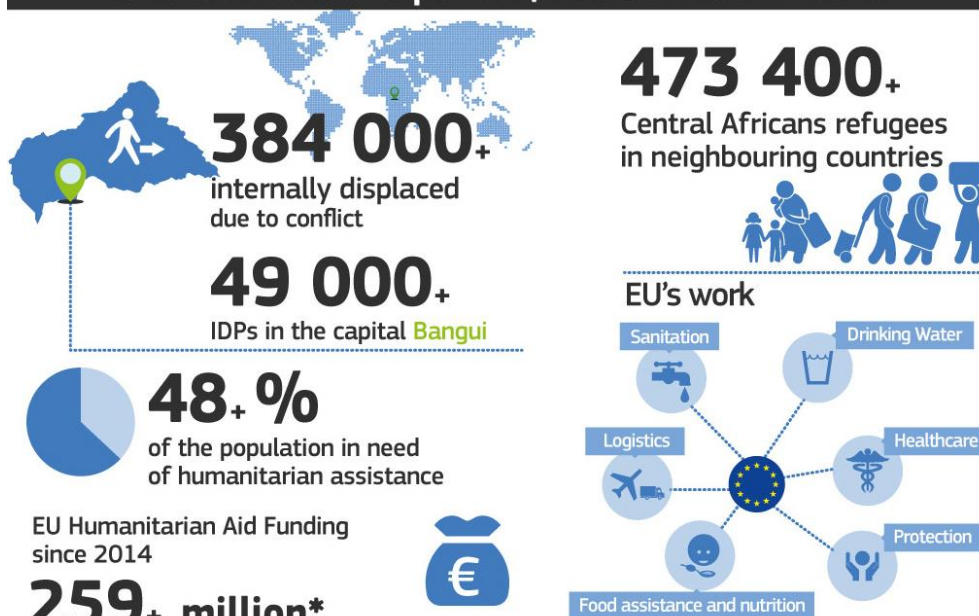
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Central African Republic | Humanitarian Crisis



Key messages

- The **humanitarian situation** in the Central African Republic (CAR) **remains extremely serious** almost three years after the current crisis erupted in December 2013. Some **2.3 million people** – almost half of the population – **are in need of humanitarian assistance**. 2.4 million children are affected by the crisis, according to UNICEF.
- Despite a successful election, **humanitarian needs persist** and are significant, alongside recovery needs. However regular fighting and access constraints complicate aid organisations' work and access to people in need.
- With over €259 million provided since 2014, **the European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance** to CAR. The European Commission alone has provided €107.5 million (in addition to €28 million for Central African refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013.
- The Commission's humanitarian assistance targets primarily needs in the areas of **nutrition, health, emergency shelter, water, sanitation** and **protection** of civilians.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Background

The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the poorest countries in the world, facing the worst humanitarian crisis since its independence in 1960. Over 384 000 people are still internally displaced (IDPs) over two years after the crisis erupted in December 2013, shortly after a change of regime. Widespread violence ensued, with attacks on civilians from Seleka, a coalition of predominantly Muslim rebel groups, and Christian militias called anti-balaka. With the support of international armed forces, the country is struggling to restore security due to the continued presence of numerous armed groups and widespread criminality. Local populations are constantly victim of abuses and arbitrary violence. In spite of relentless efforts to avoid it, ethno-religious tensions remain strong.

Major challenges

Almost half of the 4.8 million population of the country is in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. The IDP situation is of particular concern. There is no national capacity to assist those affected, and relief efforts are taking place under very challenging conditions. Humanitarian organisations are still providing the bulk of essential services across the country.

The persistence of banditry episodes further complicates the ability of partners to gain access to people in need. The ongoing insecurity combined with adverse climatic effects has more than halved the food production. As a result, crop availability is expected to be insufficient to cover the population's consumption needs in 2016. The level of chronic malnutrition has increased and is currently among the highest in the world (around 40% of the under 5-year old population according to UNICEF).

In view of the huge needs of a large part of the population of the country and the challenges ahead, it is crucial to maintain CAR on the international community agenda.



The national health system has collapsed due to widespread violence, destruction of public infrastructure and looting. Humanitarian organisations on the ground are helping to provide basic services and medicines, but the overall situation remains alarming with less than half of the Central Africans having effective access to health.



Protection of civilians is a major issue. Summary executions of men are being reported, violence against women is rampant. Between 6 000 and 10 000 boys and girls have been forcibly recruited by armed groups. These children are due to be freed following an agreement reached at the Bangui Forum in May 2015.



Around 1.8 million people are food insecure. Communities' stocks are empty and livelihoods have been severely affected by fighting and looting, provoking substantial increases in food prices and a substantial decrease in household income.



Safe drinking water is scarce. Less than 35% of the population has access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. In most of the displacement sites, access to water remains an issue in spite of significant improvements brought about by humanitarian interventions over the past months. Sanitation is challenging due to lack of latrines and proper waste management in congested IDP camps across the country.



Emergency shelter and basic construction materials and tools remain a priority. Worn out tarpaulins must be replaced. In order to assist people to return to their place of origin, shelter support in the form of construction materials and tools is required.



The European Union's response

The European Union – Commission and Member States – is the **largest provider of relief assistance to the Central African Republic**, with support of over €259 million since 2014 to help those in need throughout the country. A team of experts from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), is based in Bangui and is closely monitoring the situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of funds by partner organisations.

Humanitarian assistance from the European Commission to the Central African Republic for 2016 amounts to €24 million. This aid will benefit around 553 000 people in need through different programmes covering the most urgent needs. Since the escalation of violence in December 2013, the Commission has committed €107.5 million in humanitarian aid (in addition to €28 million which have been allocated to cover the essential needs of CAR refugees in neighbouring countries). Relief assistance is focused on displaced people, both inside and outside IDP camps.

The EU has organised **repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel** into CAR to help those affected by the conflict. In 2016, the European Commission is also supporting the UN humanitarian air services (UNHAS) in order to facilitate the transport of humanitarian personnel to remote locations which would otherwise remain inaccessible due to insecurity and very poor infrastructure.



The European Commission is funding humanitarian projects to enable free access to primary **health care services** through mobile clinics, with a main focus on life-saving interventions and the control of epidemic-prone infectious diseases. Projects seeking to improve the **protection of civilians** are also being supported, including tracking of incidents, medical, psychosocial and legal support to victims as well as actions offering a protective environment for children through the Children of Peace initiative. **Food assistance** is a priority, so as to prevent a nationwide crisis. Relief efforts aim at combining in kind assistance and cash

transfer initiatives once the commercial activities can resume.

Moreover, the European Commission is supporting integrated actions to provide safe drinking **water**, re-establish decent **sanitation** facilities and promote better **hygiene** practices (WASH). In crowded internally displaced camps, this is crucial to prevent diseases and epidemic outbreaks. In 2016, 152 000 people will benefit from improved access to sanitation through latrines construction and waste management system. **Emergency shelter and non-food items** such as blankets and mosquito nets are also being made available. **Logistics and coordination of assistance** are of key importance to an effective and efficient delivery of aid as well as humanitarian air service and adequate security management.

The European Commission has provided **€28 million to help Central African [refugees*](#) in neighbouring countries since December 2013**. Most of the funding is spent in Cameroon (€17 million), which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing the CAR at the beginning of the crisis; €8.8 million has been allocated for Chad, and €3 million for the DRC and the Republic of Congo. The humanitarian assistance addresses the basic needs of refugees such as **shelter, food, health, protection, [water, sanitation and hygiene*](#)**.

The EU is committed to comprehensively address the CAR crisis in all its dimensions: humanitarian, security, development and political. One example of this approach is the first multi-donor EU Trust Fund – EUTF – called **Bêkou** ("hope" in Sango language), established in July 2014 by the European Union and three Member States: France, Germany and the Netherlands, later joined by Italy and Switzerland. It aims at promoting the stabilisation and reconstruction of CAR and has been established for a maximum duration of 60 months in order to provide a medium-term response. The **Commission's contribution stands at more than €100 million** (around €97 million from development funds and €3 million in humanitarian funds devoted to Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development) out of a total "Bekou" budget of €136 million.



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Examples of ECHO funded relief projects

It is estimated that 70% of health is delivered through the humanitarian system. Primary and secondary healthcare is provided by the national health system supported by international NGOs. In particular, funding from the Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, DG ECHO, is enabling partners such as **Save The Children, ALIMA, International Medical Corps (IMC)** and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) to intervene in 3 hospitals and 14 health centres, giving free access to quality care including psychosocial and mental care to 153 000 people. © OCHA



Funded by the European Commission, **UNICEF** is implementing a project to urgently respond to new displacements of populations, the Rapid-Response Mechanism. 54 multi-sectorial needs assessment and 42 emergency interventions have already been conducted. This brought relief to the urgent needs of newly displaced populations (109 303 people received Non-Food Item kits and 25 057 people urgent Water Sanitation and Hygiene assistance). © EU/ECHO

Households in the worst-hit conflict-affected areas are struggling to cope with the decreasing availability of food and income. Harvest theft, non-operational markets and extreme poverty pose additional challenges, which could trigger a country-wide food and nutrition crisis. The European Commission is funding **the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO)** to assist women and vulnerable groups, including households which lost their means of existence. © FAO



The [EU Children of Peace*](#) initiative has devoted funds to children affected by conflict in Central African Republic. Several partner organisations have implemented the projects under this line of funding. In 2015, **Save the Children** provided support to a total of 14 069 children affected by the conflict: 6 334 of them are in Bangui and 7 735 in Ouaka. With this action, thousands of children gained access to education and assistance was provided to children suffering

from traumas. © Save the Children

In 2016, **Plan International** is providing support to a total of 5 580 children affected by the conflict in Boda, Lobaye. The action gives access to quality integrated early childhood care and development to 800 children from 0-5 years old; access to quality primary education in a safe environment for 2 780 vulnerable children from age 6-13 and alternative education for 2 000 marginalized adolescents from age 14-18 while increasing the capacity of promoting peace within the communities.

The Central African Republic is a landlocked country with poorly developed infrastructures. Therefore, the European Commission is funding **UNHAS** (United Nations Humanitarian Air Service) for a country wide operation. The service is provided to 60 humanitarian partner organisations and helps avoid long and dangerous travel on land routes. © EU/ECHO



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